

NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Criminal Justice Institute



Communications Division

Mica Perry, Communications Director
317.232.1292 or mperry@cji.in.gov

For Immediate Release

February 28, 2008

State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies Prepare for St. Patrick's Day Blitz

(Indianapolis, IN.)— Last year on St. Patrick's Day 44 percent of the 105 drivers and motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes nationwide had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 or greater, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

For many Hoosiers, St. Patrick's Day has become a popular day to celebrate with friends and family. However, given that many people will celebrate this occasion with alcohol, the day can also be very dangerous.

In order to deter impaired driving on Indiana's roadways this St. Patrick's Day, the Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving is joining with more than 200 state and local law enforcement agencies to launch a statewide, high-visibility enforcement blitz from March 7-23. While this 16 day blitz will cover St. Patrick's Day, it will also take place during the Big Ten Basketball Tournaments in Indianapolis.

"Impaired drivers are a grave threat to the safety of Indiana's roadways. Motorists should be aware that state and local officers will be conducting increased enforcement and will deploy special patrols to detect and arrest impaired drivers," said Curtis Hill, chairman of the Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving.

In 2006, 23.8 percent of fatal crashes that occurred in Indiana from March 1 – May 31 involved drivers with a BAC of 0.08 or greater. This means that out of 214 fatalities that occurred, 51 of those fatalities involved a driver who had a BAC of 0.08 or greater.

Also in 2006 from March 1 – May 31, almost five percent of all collisions that occurred in Indiana involved drivers with a BAC of 0.01 or greater. This means that out of 31,252 collisions, 1,464 were alcohol related.

NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Criminal Justice Institute



Communications Division

Mica Perry, Communications Director
317.232.1292 or mperry@cji.in.gov

Impaired driving remains one of America's deadliest problems. According to NHTSA, in 2006, 42,642 people were killed nationally in motor vehicle crashes. Of that number 13,470 people were killed in traffic crashes that involved at least one driver or motorcyclist with a BAC of 0.08 or higher.

"Remember, impairment starts with the first drink. With so many events taking place around Indiana during the month of March, it is important to plan ahead before indulging. Because if you are suspected of drunk driving, a fun night out could turn into a nightmare," Hill added.

Safe Holiday Practices

By following these easy steps, a driver can enjoy a safe St. Patrick's Day without jeopardizing their life and/or the lives of the others who may be on the road.

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin;
- Before drinking, please designate a sober driver and give that person your keys;
- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation so you are sure to get home safely;
- Use your community's Sober Rides program
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact your local law enforcement or call 911;
- And remember, if you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

The Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving serves as the public opinion catalyst and the implementing body for statewide action to reduce death and injury on Indiana roadways. The Council provides grant funding, training, coordination and ongoing support to state and local traffic safety advocates. For more information, please visit www.in.gov/cji/traffic

###